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Page Denied

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Denied

longer leaning strongly in support of him. And unless he does very well, I'll vote against him. SEN. HOWARD BAKER (Majority Leader): As of this moment, I see nothing that would disqualify Meese from serving as attorney general, and I continue to support him.

JONES: Meese will return to the Hill in an attempt to clarify these matters. But as long as the president sticks with him, he can probably survive. However, regardless of how it finally turns out, Democrats think they have still one more campaign issue to use against Ronald Reagan. Phil Jones, CBS News, Capitol Hill.

CP05 WEATHER/
NORTHEAST

RATHER: Spring officially arrives in less than a week, next Tuesday, but you wouldn't know it in the Northeast. What's called the worst March snowstorm since 1888 hit places like Portland, Maine, 15 inches of snow on the ground by midday and more falling, accumulations up to 3 inches elsewhere. In Connecticut, there was both snow and sleet. Hartford struggled to cope with it all, including power outages to thousands.

CP06 CENTRAL AMERICA
/U.S. AID

RATHER: After six days of very heavy White House lobbying, the Senate Appropriations Committee today approved two record aid proposals for Central America. It gave the go-ahead for \$93 million in emergency military aid for El Salvador, aid the administration says is needed to keep that country's army from collapsing. On covert aid to Nicaragua's contras, rebels fighting the Sandinista regime, the committee reversed itself and approved an immediate \$7 million and a possible \$14 million more at a later date. As David Martin has learned, the administration request is needed to fund a growing guerrilla force.

MARTIN: Informed sources tell CBS News the number of CIA-supported guerrillas battling the Sandinista government of Nicaragua has grown to nearly 18,000, an increase of 8,000 since last summer. The CIA is spending \$3 million a month on this army of contras, which has now reached the size limit set by President Reagan two years ago. It is also nearly twice the size of the Nicaraguan-backed guerrilla forces fighting to overthrow the government of El Salvador. Yet intelligence analysts say its impact is substantially less. The contras have now begun mining Nicaraguan ports in an attempt to force Mexico to shut off vital oil shipments. They have also bombed a radio intercept station used by Cubans and Nicaraguans to eavesdrop on the Salvadoran army. Yet intelligence analysts say there is no evidence the operation is forcing the Sandinistas to back away from their support of the guerrillas in El Salvador or their own military buildup. Soviet bloc ships continue to bring in new military hardware for the Sandinista army, the

35, 728

latest delivery a shipload of tanks. But there is still no sign of the long-expected arrival of Soviet-build MiG aircraft. This video tape purchased by CBS News shows most of the Sandinista air force. Except for these helicopters outfitted with rocket pods, it is a delapidated force of Korean War vintage planes. But the Sandinistas are building a new airfield with runways that are the longest in Central America and taxiways where planes can disperse behind earthen shields. Intelligence analysts say that sooner or later the Sandinistas intend to base modern jet aircraft here. Some analysts believe the Sandinistas will accelerate their buildup during the American presidential campaign, betting that President Reagan will not risk greater involvement in a controversial war. But they say if he is re-elected there's likely to be another step up in America's not-so-secret war against Nicaragua. David Martin, CBS News, the Pentagon.

CP07 LEBANON/CIVIL
CONFLICT

RATHER: The success of Beirut's cease-fire is measured against the ferocity of the fighting. Using this yardstick today, the Lebanese capital's latest cease-fire appeared to be holding. Steve Croft has more from there.

CROFT: Frogs croaking, to the urban guerrillas guarding this patch of no man's land it's the sweetest sound there is. It means nothing's moving. The cease-fire gave Moslem militiamen enough free time and confidence for a card game just a block from their Christian enemies. (Footage of card game) But it did not mean that firing had ceased. UNIDENTIFIED LEBANESE: I think it's a joke.

CROFT: In Lebanon cease-fire is a political term used much the same way the term balanced budget is used in the United States, something highly desirable that no one is quite sure how to achieve. Ask a Lebanese how long he expects this cease-fire to last, and he may reply, 'When did it begin?' UNIDENTIFIED LEBANESE 2: Not cease-fire yet, no. We hope, we hope.

CROFT: The accord reached in Switzerland still needs to be worked out in the streets. Military leaders will have to figure out a way to open the airport in the harbor. And anyone of a half a dozen groups can frustrate their efforts by exercising the purest form of Lebanese political expression. You could hear the dialogue across the Green Line that separates Christian east and Moslem west. It seemed to say, 'We're still here, and we'll still be here tomorrow.' Steve Croft, CBS News, Beirut.

CP08 PERSIAN GULF
WAR

RATHER: Iraq tried today to add diplomatic pressure to its arsenal in the long-running war with Iran. At an emergency Baghdad meeting, foreign ministers and other diplomats from 19 Arab countries gave firm support to